Worksheet: Questions for Initial Diagnostic Interview[1]

- Tell me what motivated you to call BTC? What is the **reason** that you called us in? (Problem, opportunity, challenge) Describe the situation. What is going on? Why now? How do you know?

- Why is this an issue? What's the **impact** of this situation? [Individual - group - system] For whom is this creating energy? Who sees it as a problem/opportunity? Where is it occurring or not occurring? How big an issue is it? What would be the consequences of doing nothing?

- What **evidence** do we have that the issue exists?

- How would you **describe the system** where the problem is lodged? (Product, producers, value stream, customers, quality, cost, interfaces, process performance measures, etc.)

- What **factors** contribute to perpetuating the status quo? What's keeping it as it is? (What are people doing or not doing? How might things such as the organizational reward systems, structures, rules, policies, relationships, and so on contribute?)

- What have you **tried** so far? What have been the results? (What's worked? Not worked? Why?)

- **Ideally**, what would you like to happen? If you had what you wanted, describe to me what it would look like?
    - ***Note:*** *this is your first draft of the desired outcome(s), which drives all other aspects of the intervention. Probe, paraphrase, re-iterate, use this as the anchor.*

[1]Adapted from work of Dan Stone and Robert Marshak, Ph.D., *The Initial Interview: Assessing Client Needs,"* The 1993 Annual: Developing Human Resources, Pfeiffer & Company.

- What are the needed **supports** for the changes you'd like? (Key people, resources, time, outside events, etc.)

- What forces **inhibit** the changes? (Key people, resources, time, outside events, etc.)

- What part do you (the **client**) have in keeping the situation as it is? How do you help or hinder?

- What are you (the client) willing to **invest** in finding a solution? (Time, risk, involvement, resources, commitment, information, etc.)

- What do you **want from BTC** (the BTC CI-P)? (Support, active involvement, resources, types of consulting services, nature of the relationship, etc.)

- Is there **anything else** that I need to know in order to understand the situation?

- What BTC (the CI-P) would **want from you** is (time, relationship, resources, commitment, etc.)

- What are the **next steps** we need to take? (Who? What? When? Where? How?) Who needs to sponsor the project? Who needs to manage the project? Who needs to be involved?

Note: *This is intended as a guide and not necessarily as a linear step-by-step process or questions. Remember, the entire C-IP Consulting Process is a collaborative iterative process of inquiry and action that we cycle through, learn, and cycle back again.*

Table 1: Entry Tasks & Actions for Practitioner & Client Meeting

TASKS	ACTIONS
1. Introductions	Share and acknowledge personal and professional information for building client/practitioner relationship. Engage client with genuine interest and curiosity. Track what is being said and how information is being shared; attend to process and content; observe information about the culture, morale, and relationships.
2. Clarify meeting boundaries	Model effective meeting management: time, pace, outcomes, who needs to be present, roles, etc.
3. Identify client(s)	Identify contracting client(s), the client making use of the consultation, and the client with the authority to control the process and implement outcomes.
4. Invite client to "tell their story"	Ask questions and seek examples to understand concerns and issues, what the client system wants to change, the need behind the request for consultation, other change efforts, current and previous strategies, successes and failures. Actively listen and reflect back to the client understanding of issues and concerns. Learn, adapt to, and appropriately use the language of the system.
5. Inquire about client wants/hopes & expectations,	Engage in dialogue about wants, expectations, hopes, fears, and risks for the work and client/practitioner relationship. Attend to feelings in client and in self -- warmth, excitement, hostility, disinterest.
6. Explore diversity issues	Explore client/practitioner differences and how they might impact the work and relationship. Inquire and share about organizational patterns and impact on different groups; what is being tracked, heard, seen, and felt; and the meaning being made of it so far.
7. Explore values and ethics	Share values and ethical boundaries and inquire about those for the client. Foresee potential value conflicts or ethical dilemmas embedded in the consultation and explore them with the client.
8. Surface resistance	Explore the forces that will help and hinder success. Identify, name, and explore resistance in self and the client. Inquire about what is not being discussed.
9. Assess "Fit"	Assess "fit" between the client/practitioner needs, values, interests, time requirements, credibility, confidence, trust, readiness, and commitment to the work. Decide to proceed, recycle, or tell the client *NO*

Table 2: Contracting Tasks and Actions for Practitioner & Client Meeting

TASKS	ACTIONS
1. Clarify client goals and desired outcomes	Collaboratively develop clear statement of consultation goals and desired outcomes of the intervention.
2. Describe consultation and requirements for success	Collaboratively develop description of the consultation/change process, possibilities and dilemmas embedded in it, implications for individual, interpersonal, group, and organization levels of the system, and what is needed from the client, organization, and practitioner for a successful consultation.
3. Clarify wants, needs, wishes	Explore and share client/practitioner wants, needs, and wishes...for contact, control, information, and involvement in the consultation. Make affirming statements and demonstrate understanding and empathy. Provide reassurance.
4. Clarify roles, responsibilities, commitment	Clarify and define client/practitioner roles, responsibilities, and levels of commitment. Agree about joint client/practitioner responsibility for consultation outcomes.
5. Define project/consultation scope	Collaboratively define the scope of the project, including initial strategies, objectives, steps, critical success factors, stakeholders, participants, products (if any) and delivery time lines, external factors that can impact the consultation, and who else needs to be involved in defining the details of the project.
6. Negotiate consultation resources	Negotiate time, money, support services, and involvement of personnel required for successful project completion. Discuss resource requirements openly (both human and fiscal).
7. Establish process for feedback, evaluation, and termination	Establish ongoing process for evaluating all aspects of the consultation, including outcomes, deliverables, client/practitioner relationship, and time lines. Provide for re-contracting at appropriate intervals. Establish ground rules for terminating the consultation.
8. Summarize contract and put it in written form	Collaboratively develop a written agreement summarizing the consultation, including: client/practitioner expectations, process and scope, outcomes, deliverables, client/practitioner relationship, time lines, nature and frequency of client/practitioner communication, resource requirements, etc. Determine next steps – who, what, when, where, how, how much, how long.